

The **Bosphorus** or **Bosporus** also known as the Istanbul Strait (Turkish: İstanbul Boğazı), is a strait that forms part of the boundary between Europe and Asia. It is one of the Turkish Straits, along with the Dardanelles. The world's narrowest strait used for international navigation, it connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara (which is connected by the Dardanelles to the Aegean Sea, and thereby to the Mediterranean Sea).



Bosphorus' limits are defined as the connecting line between the lighthouses Rumeli Feneri and Anadolu Feneri in the north and between the Ahırkapı Feneri and the Kadıköy İnciburnu Feneri in the south. The strait is between the limits 31 km (17 nmi) long, with a width of 3,329 m (1.798 nmi) at the northern entrance and 2,826 m (1.526 nmi) at the southern entrance. Its maximum

width is 3,420 m (1.85 nmi) between Umuryeri and Büyükdere Limanı, and minimum width 704 m (0.380 nmi) between Kandilli Point and Aşiyan.

The depth of Bosphorus varies from 36 to 124 m (118 to 407 ft) in midstream with an average of 65 m (213 ft). The deepest location is between Kandilli and Bebek with 110 m (360 ft). The most shallow locations are off Kadıköy İnciburnu on the northward route with 18 m (59 ft) and off Aşiyan Point on the southward route with 13 m (43 ft). The shores of the strait are heavily populated as the city of Istanbul (with a metropolitan area in excess of 11 million inhabitants) straddles it.

The name comes from Greek Bosporos (Βόσπορος), which the ancient Greeks analysed as bous βοῦς 'ox' + poros πόρος 'means of passing a river, ford, ferry', thus meaning 'ox-ford'.

Although it has been known for a while that the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara flow into each other in an example of a density flow, findings of a study by the University of Leeds in August 2010 reveal that there is in fact an underwater river flowing through the Mediterranean and under the Bosphorus caused by the difference in density of the two seas, which would be the sixth largest river on Earth if it were to be on land. It has also been thought to be a Thracian form of Phôsphoros (Φωσφόρος), "light-bearing", an epithet of the goddess Hecate.

Some have argued that the resulting massive flooding of the inhabited and probably farmed northern shores of the Black Sea is thought to be the historic basis for the flood stories found in the Epic of Gilgamesh and in the Bible in Book of Genesis, Chapters 6-9. On the other hand, there is also evidence for a flood of water going in the opposite direction, from the Black Sea into the Sea of Marmara around 7000 or 8000 BC.

It is also said in myth that floating rocks known as the Symplegades or Clashing Rocks once crushed any ship that attempted passage of the Bosphorus until the hero Jason obtained passage, whereupon the rocks became fixed, and Greek access to the Black Sea was opened.

As the only passage between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the Bosphorus has always been of great commercial and strategic importance. The Greek city-state of Athens in the 5th century BC, which was dependent on grain imports from Scythia, therefore maintained critical alliances with cities which controlled the straits, such as the Megarian colony Byzantium.

The strategic significance of the strait was one of the factors in the decision of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great to found there in AD 330 his new capital, Constantinople, which came to be known as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

On 29 May 1453 it was conquered by the emerging Ottoman Empire. In fact, as the Ottoman Turks closed in on Istanbul, they constructed a fortification on each side of the strait, Anadoluhisari (1393) and Rumelihisari (1451).



*The strategic importance of the Bosphorus remains high, and control over it has been an objective of a number of hostilities in modern history, notably the Russo–Turkish War, 1877–1878, as well as of the attack of the Allied Powers on the Dardanelles during the 1915 battle of Gallipoli in the course of World War I.*

*At its peak in the 16th through the 18th centuries, the Ottoman Empire had wrested control of the entire Black Sea area, which was for the time an "Ottoman lake", on which Russian warships were prohibited.*



*Subsequently, several international treaties have governed vessels using the waters. Under the Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi of 1833, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits were to be closed on*

*Russian demand to naval vessels of other powers. Following World War I, the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres demilitarized the strait and made it an international territory under the control of the League of Nations. This was amended under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which restored the straits to Turkish territory – but allowed all foreign warships and commercial shipping to traverse the straits freely. Turkey eventually rejected the terms of that treaty, and subsequently Turkey remilitarized the straits area. The reversion to this old regime was formalized under the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Turkish Straits of July 1936. That convention, which is still in practical force as of 2008, treats the straits as an international shipping lane, but Turkey does retain the right to restrict the naval traffic of non-Black Sea nations (such as Greece, a traditional enemy, or Algeria).*

*During World War II, through February 1945, when Turkey was neutral for most of the length of the conflict, the Dardanelles were closed to the ships of the belligerent nations. In the conferences during World War II, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin openly requested the concession of Soviet military bases on the Straits, even though Turkey was not involved in the war. This incident, coupled with Stalin's demands for the restitution of the Turkish provinces of Kars, Artvin and Ardahan to the Soviet Union (which were lost by Turkey with the Russo–Turkish War of 1877–1878, but were regained with the Treaty of Kars in 1921) was one of the main reasons why Turkey decided to give up its general principle of neutrality in foreign affairs. Turkey did declare war against Germany in February 1945, but did not engage in offensive actions.*

*In more recent years, the Turkish Straits have become particularly important for the oil industry. Russian oil, from ports such as Novorossiysk, is exported by tankers to western Europe and the U.S. via the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles straits.*

*The waters of the strait are traversed by numerous ferries. Two bridges cross the Bosphorus. The first, the Bosphorus Bridge, is 1,074 m (3,524 ft) long and was completed in 1973. The second, Fatih Sultan Mehmet (Bosphorus II) Bridge, is 1,090 m (3,576 ft) long, and was completed in 1988 about 5 km (3 mi) north of the first bridge. It forms part of the Trans-European Motorway. Plans for a third bridge, which will allow transit traffic to by-pass the city traffic, have been approved by the Ministry of Transportation. The bridge will be built near the northern end of the Bosphorus, between the villages of Garipçe on the European side and Poyrazköy on the Asian side.<sup>[11]</sup> It will be part of the "Northern Marmara Motorway", which will be further integrated with the existing Black Sea Coastal Highway.*

*Another crossing, Marmaray, is a 13.7 km (8.5 mi) long undersea railway tunnel currently under construction and is expected to be completed in 2012. Approximately 1,400 m (4,593 ft) of the tunnel will run under the strait, at a depth of about 55 m (180 ft).*

*In 2010, a team of scientists led by the University of Leeds used a robotic 'yellow submarine' to observe detailed flows within an 'undersea river' for the very first time. Submarine channels are similar to land rivers, but they are formed by density currents - underwater flow mixtures of sand, mud and water that are denser than sea water and so sink and flow along the bottom. These channels are the main transport pathway for sediments to the deep sea where they form sedimentary deposits.*

*These deposits ultimately hold not only untapped reserves of gas and oil, they also house important secrets - from clues on past climate change to the ways in which mountains were formed.*

*The team, led by Dr Dan Parsons and Dr Jeff Peakall from the University of Leeds, has been able to study the detailed flow within these channels. Dr Parsons quoted as: "The channel complex and the density flow provide the ideal natural laboratory for investigating and detailing the structure of the flow field through the channel. Our initial findings show that the flow in these channels is quite different to the flow in river channels on land. Specifically as flow moves around a bend it spirals in the opposite direction in the deep sea compared to the spiral to that found in river channels on land. This is important in understanding the sedimentology and layers of sediment deposited by these systems."*

*It is thought by some that the channels in the Black Sea were formed around 6,000 years ago when sea levels were approaching their current point. The Mediterranean swelled and breached through into the Black Sea - once an isolated freshwater lake - via the Bosphorus Strait. As the waters surged, they carried a dense, salty fluid which formed a network of sea-floor channels that are almost constantly active, even today.*

*Some people even believe that this was the biblical event Noah's flood, but despite their historical significance, the first spectacular images of these submarine channels were only obtained in 2006 (by researchers at Memorial University, Newfoundland, Canada who are project partners in this study).*

*The team will use the data obtained to create innovative computer simulations that can be used to model how sediment flows through these channels. The models the team will produce will have broad applications, including inputting into the design of seafloor engineering by oil and gas companies.*

*The project was led by Dr Jeff Peakall and Dr Daniel Parsons at the University of Leeds in collaboration with the University of Southampton, Memorial University (Newfoundland, Canada), and the Institute of Marine Sciences (Izmir, Turkey). The survey was run and coordinated from the Institute of Marine Sciences Research Ship, the R/V Koca Piri Reis.*

*The researchers estimate that the river - known as a submarine channel - would be the sixth largest river in the world if it were on land based on the amount of water flowing through it.<sup>[12]</sup>*

*The **Dolmabahçe Palace** (Turkish: Dolmabahçe Sarayı) in Istanbul, Turkey, located at the European side of the Bosphorus, served as the main administrative center of the Ottoman Empire from 1856 to 1922, apart from a twenty-year interval (1889-1909) in which the Yıldız Palace was used.*

*The Dolmabahçe Palace was ordered by the Empire's 31st Sultan, Abdülmecid I, and built between the years 1843 and 1856. Hacı Said Ağa was responsible for the construction works, while the project was realised by architects Garabet Balyan, his son Nigoğayos Balyan, and Evanis Kalfa. The construction works cost five million Ottoman meciidiye gold coins, the*

*equivalent of 35 tonnes of gold. Fourteen tonnes of gold in the form of gold leaf were used to gild the ceilings of the 45,000 square metre monoblock palace, which stands on an area of 110,000 m<sup>2</sup>.*

*The design contains eclectic elements from the Baroque, Rococo and Neoclassical styles, blended with traditional Ottoman architecture to create a new synthesis. The palace layout and décor reflect the increasing influence of European styles and standards on Ottoman culture and art during the Tanzimat period. Functionally, on the other hand, it retains elements of traditional Ottoman palace life, and also features of traditional Turkish homes. It is the largest palace in Turkey, considering that the area of the monoblock building occupies 45,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Previously, the Sultan and his family had lived at the Topkapı Palace, but as Topkapı was lacking in up-to-date luxury and style, Abdülmecid decided to build the Dolmabahçe Palace near the site of the former Beşiktaş Palace on the Bosphorus, which was demolished. Whereas the Topkapı has exquisite examples of Iznik tiles and Ottoman carving, the Dolmabahçe palace contains much gold and crystal. Tourists are free to wander Topkapı at their leisure, while the only way to see the interior of Dolmabahçe is with a guided tour.*

*The Dolmabahçe Palace was home to six sultans from 1856, when it was first inhabited, up until the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924: The last royal to live here was Caliph Abdülmecid Efendi. A law that went into effect on March 3, 1924 transferred the ownership of the palace to the national heritage of the new Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, used the palace as a presidential residence during the summers and enacted some of his most important works here. Atatürk spent the last days of his medical treatment in this palace, where he died on November 10, 1938.*



*The world's largest Bohemian crystal chandelier is in the center hall. The chandelier, a gift from Queen Victoria, has 750 lamps and weighs 4.5 tonnes. Dolmabahçe has the largest collection of Bohemian and Baccarat crystal chandeliers in the world, and one of the great staircases has bannisters of Baccarat crystal.*

*The site of Dolmabahçe was originally a bay on the Bosphorus which was reclaimed gradually during the 18th century to become an imperial garden, much appreciated by the Ottoman sultans; it is from this garden that the name Dolmabahçe (Filled Garden) comes from, dolma meaning "filled" and bahçe meaning "garden." Various summer palaces were built here during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.*

*The palace is composed of three parts; the Mabeyn-i Hümayûn (or Selamlık, the quarters reserved for the men), Muayede Salonu (the ceremonial halls) and the Harem-i Hümayûn (the Harem, the apartments of the family of the Sultan). The palace has an area of 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> (11.2 acres), and contains 285 rooms, 46 halls, 6 baths (hamam) and 68 toilets.*

*The famous Crystal Staircase has the shape of a double horseshoe and is built of Baccarat crystal, brass and mahogany. The palace includes a large number of Hereke palace carpets made by the Hereke Imperial Factory. Also featured are 150-year-old bearskin rugs originally presented to the Sultan as a gift by the Tsar of Russia.*

*The palace is managed by Milli Saraylar Daire Başkanlığı (Directorate of National Palaces) responsible to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Dolmabahçe Palace Museum is open to public on weekdays from 9:00 to 15:00, except Mondays and Thursdays.*



*Main Entrance to the Palace*

### *Medhal (Main Entrance) Hall*

*A visit to the Dolmabahce Palace begins at the Medhal Hall. Rooms leading off the Medhal are towards the sea and the land. The rooms facing the sea were used by the leading Ottoman officials, the Grand Vizier and the other state ministers, while the rooms facing the land were used by various administrators of the palace and the state, such as the Palace Marshall, Seyhülislam, and members of the House of Representatives (Meclis-i Mebusan) and the Senate (Meclis-i Ayan).*

*Guests would first wait in this hall and then would be led inside at the proper time by a palace protocol officer. On entering the Medhal, one sees Boullé tables on both sides of the room, which bear the monogram of Sultan Abdülmecid on top. The royal monogram of the sultan is also on the fireplace. The English chandelier hanging in the middle of this room has sixty arms. The Hereke fabrics used as upholstery for the furniture and as draperies are in the royal shade of red.*

### *The Secreteriat's Rooms*

*The second room after the Medhal to the right is the Clerk's Hall, also referred to as the "Tiled Room." The largest painting in the palace collection, a depiction of the Surre Procession by Stefano Ussi, hangs on the left wall of this hall. Surre was used to refer to the caravans which travelled from Istanbul to Mecca during the religious month of Recep, bearing the monetary aid used to support the maintenance and the decoration of the Kaaba and to provide financial assistance to the local population of Hejaz.*



*On the wall to the right is a painting signed by the Austrian artist Rudolph Ernst depicting the fire at the Paris Municipal Theater and another painting of a Dutch Village Girl by Delandre. Decorated with French style furniture, this room also contains very valuable porcelain vases.*

## *Atatürk's room*

*Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey, spent the last days of his medical treatment in the palace as his health deteriorated. Atatürk died at 9:05 a.m. on November 10, 1938, in a bedroom that is now part of the museum. All the clocks in the palace were stopped and set to 9:05 after his death. Although this has changed recently and clocks are set to different times around the palace, the clock in the room where he died is still pointing to 9:05 a.m.*

*The **Tünel** (English: Tunnel) or **F2** is a short underground railway line in Istanbul, Turkey. It is an underground funicular with two stations, connecting the quarters of Karaköy and Beyoğlu. Located at the northern shore of the Golden Horn, the underground railway tunnel goes uphill from close to sea level and is about 573 meters long.<sup>[1]</sup> Inaugurated on January 17, 1875,<sup>[1]</sup> the Tünel is the second-oldest subterranean urban rail line in the world after the London Underground (1863), but the first subterranean urban rail line in continental Europe; though the first full subway line with multiple underground stations in continental Europe was Line 1 of the Budapest Metro (1896).*



*The Tünel was originally conceived by the French engineer Eugène-Henri Gavand in 1867.<sup>[1]</sup> Its purpose was to provide an easy ride between the neighbourhoods of Pera (Beyoğlu) and Galata (Karaköy), both of which were in the relatively newer part of Istanbul, on the northern shore of the Golden Horn. Many people used to work in Galata close to sea level, and live uphill in Pera, about 60 metres higher. The Tünel was to spare them this difficult walk,*

*Two years later, on November 6, 1869, Gavand received permission from the Ottoman sultan*

*Abdülaziz to start the project. After finding foreign funding, construction began on July 30, 1871, and ended in December 1874. The Tünel was finally opened for service on January 17, 1875.*

*When it first opened, the rail wagons that were used in Tünel were powered by steam engines. The Tünel was nationalized in 1939 to become a part of the new İETT (İstanbul Elektrik Tramvay ve Tünel) transportation organization. In 1971, the Tünel was renovated and modernized; it was electrified, the double track was replaced by a single track, and the original wooden cars were replaced by metal ones running on tires.*

*Galata and Pera are now called Karaköy and Beyoğlu, respectively. The lower station is named Karaköy (located on the eastern end of Tersane Avenue) and the upper station Tünel Meydanı - Tünel Square (located on the southern end of İstiklal Avenue). A trip between the two stations takes about 1.5 minutes, with an extra two minutes of waiting between operations to allow passengers to board the train. The Tünel has two trains running simultaneously on the same track with two steel cars (with pneumatic tires) attached to each, and their cruising speed is roughly 25 km/h. There is a short duplex part of the track in the middle, where two trains pass side by side and continue their ways to opposite directions.*

*Today, the short Tünel line is no longer as vital for Istanbul's inner city traffic as it used to be back in the 19th century, but it is still a part of the municipal transport network and integrated tickets are valid. A larger (but separate) nearby metro system is available.*

*The **Galata Tower** (Galata Kulesi in Turkish) — called Christea Turris (the Tower of Christ in Latin) by the Genoese — is a medieval stone tower in the Galata district of Istanbul, Turkey, just to the north of the Golden Horn. One of the city's most striking landmarks, it is a high, cone-capped cylinder that dominates the skyline and affords a panoramic vista of Old Istanbul and its environs.*



*The nine-storey tower is 66.90 meters tall (62.59 m without the ornament on top, 51.65 m at the observation deck), and was the city's tallest structure when it was built. The elevation at ground level is 35 meters above sea-level. The tower has an external diameter of 16.45 meters at the base, an 8.95 meters diameter inside, and walls that are 3.75 meters thick.*

*There is a restaurant and café on its upper floors which commands a magnificent view of Istanbul and the Bosphorus. Also located on the upper floors is a nightclub which hosts a Turkish show. There are two operating elevators that carry visitors from the lower level to the upper levels.*

*The tower was built as Christea Turris in 1348 during an expansion of the Genoese colony in Constantinople. It was the apex of the fortifications surrounding the Genoese citadel of Galata. The current tower should not be confused with the old Tower of Galata, an original Byzantine tower, named Megalos Pyrgos, which controlled the northern end of the massive sea chain that closed the entrance to the Golden Horn. That tower was on a different site and was largely destroyed during the Fourth Crusade in 1204.*

*The upper section of the tower with the conical cap was slightly modified in several restorations during the Ottoman period when it was used as an observation tower for spotting fires.*

*According to the Seyahatname of Ottoman historian and traveller Evliya Çelebi, in circa 1630-1632, Hezarfen Ahmet Çelebi flew as an early aviator using artificial wings for gliding from this tower over the Bosphorus to the slopes of Üsküdar on the Anatolian side, nearly six kilometres away.<sup>[1]</sup> Evliya Çelebi also tells of Hezarfen's brother, Lagari Hasan Çelebi, performing the first flight with a rocket in a conical cage filled with gunpowder in 1633. Starting from 1717 the Ottomans began to use the tower for spotting fires in the city. In 1794, during the reign of Sultan Selim III, the roof of the tower made of lead and wood and the stairs were severely damaged by a fire. Another fire damaged the building in 1831, upon which a new restoration work took place. In 1875, during a storm, the conic roof on the top of the building was destroyed. The tower remained without this conic roof for the rest of the Ottoman period.*

*Many years later, in 1965-1967, during the Turkish Republic, the original conical cap was restored. During this final restoration in the 1960s, the wooden interior of the tower was replaced by a concrete structure and it was commercialized and opened to the public.*

**Taksim Square** (Turkish: Taksim Meydanı) situated in the European part of Istanbul, Turkey, is a major shopping, tourist and leisure district famed for its restaurants, shops and hotels. It is considered the heart of modern Istanbul, and is the location of the Cumhuriyet Anıtı (Republic Monument), which was built in 1928 and commemorates the formation of the Turkish Republic.

*Taksim, (from Arabic) means "division" or "distribution". The Taksim square was originally the point where the main water lines from the north of Istanbul were collected and branched off to other parts of the city (hence the name). This use for the area was established by Sultan Mahmut I. The square takes its name from the stone reservoir which is located in this area. Additionally, the word "Taksim" can refer to a special improvisational musical form in Turkish classical music*

*that is guided by the Maqam system. There also used to be a military site built in the 19th century but it was demolished in the early 1940s.*



*Taksim is a main transportation hub and a popular destination for both tourists and the native population of Istanbul. İstiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue), a long pedestrian shopping street, ends at this square, and a nostalgic tram runs from the square along the avenue, ending near the Tünel (1875) which is the world's second-oldest subway line after London's Underground (1863). Surrounding Taksim Square are numerous travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, pubs, and international fast food chains such as Pizza Hut, McDonald's and Burger King. It is also home to some of Istanbul's grandest hotels including the InterContinental, the Ritz-Carlton and The Marmara Hotel.*

*Taksim is also a favourite location for public events such as parades, New Year celebrations or other social gatherings.*

*Atatürk Cultural Center (in Turkish: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi), a multi-purpose cultural center and opera house, is also located on Taksim Square...*

*Taksim Square is an important hub for public transport in Istanbul. In addition to serving as the*

*main transfer point for the municipal bus system, Takşim Square is also the terminus of the 4.Levent-Takşim subway line of the Istanbul Metro. The İstiklâl Avenue-Tünel nostalgic tram line also starts in Takşim.*

*Takşim's position was given an extra boost on June 29, 2006, when the new funicular line connecting the Takşim Metro station with the Kabataş tramway station and seaport was opened, allowing riders to ascend to Takşim in just 110 seconds.*

*The square has been an important venue for political protests during much of its existence. Groups from all sides of the political spectrum in Turkey, as well as many NGOs, try to demonstrate in this square in order to use its visibility for the benefit of their cause. On February 16th, 1969, some 150 leftist demonstrators were injured during clashes with right wing groups in what is known as "Bloody Sunday." In the events known as the Takşim Square massacre, thirty-six left-wing demonstrators were killed by unidentified and allegedly right-wing gunmen on the square during the Labour Day demonstrations of May 1, 1977. Following many other violent incidents, all forms of group protests were banned in the square and the police units maintain a round-the-clock presence to prevent any incidents. The ban doesn't apply to surrounding avenues or streets. Takşim Square was the location of football riots in 2000 when two Leeds United fans were stabbed to death during clashes with Galatasaray fans, the night before the 1999-2000 UEFA Cup semi-final first league match between the two teams.*

*However, gatherings for events such as New Year's Eve, Republic Day celebrations or mass-screenings of important football matches are excluded from the ban.*

*Independence Avenue (Turkish: İstiklâl Caddesi, French: Grand Rue de Pera)*



*It is one of the most famous avenues in Istanbul, Turkey, visited by nearly 3 million people in a*

single day over the course of weekends. Located in the historic Beyoğlu district, it is an elegant pedestrian street, approximately three kilometers long, which houses exquisite boutiques, music stores, bookstores, art galleries, cinemas, theaters, libraries, cafés, pubs, night clubs with live music, historical patisseries, chocolateries and restaurants.

The avenue, surrounded by late Ottoman era buildings (mostly from the 19th and early 20th centuries) that were designed with the Neo-Classical, Neo-Gothic, Beaux-Arts, Art Nouveau and First Turkish National Architecture (Birinci Millî Mimarî Akımı) styles; as well as a few Art Deco style buildings from the early years of the Turkish Republic, and a number of more recent examples of modern architecture; starts from the medieval Genoese neighbourhood around Galata Tower and ultimately leads up to Takşim Square.

Galatasaray Square is located at approximately the center of the avenue and is home to one of the finest educational institutions established in Turkey at the time of the Ottoman Empire; originally known as the Galata Sarayı Enderun-u Hümayunu (Galata Palace Imperial School) and today known as Galatasaray Lisesi.

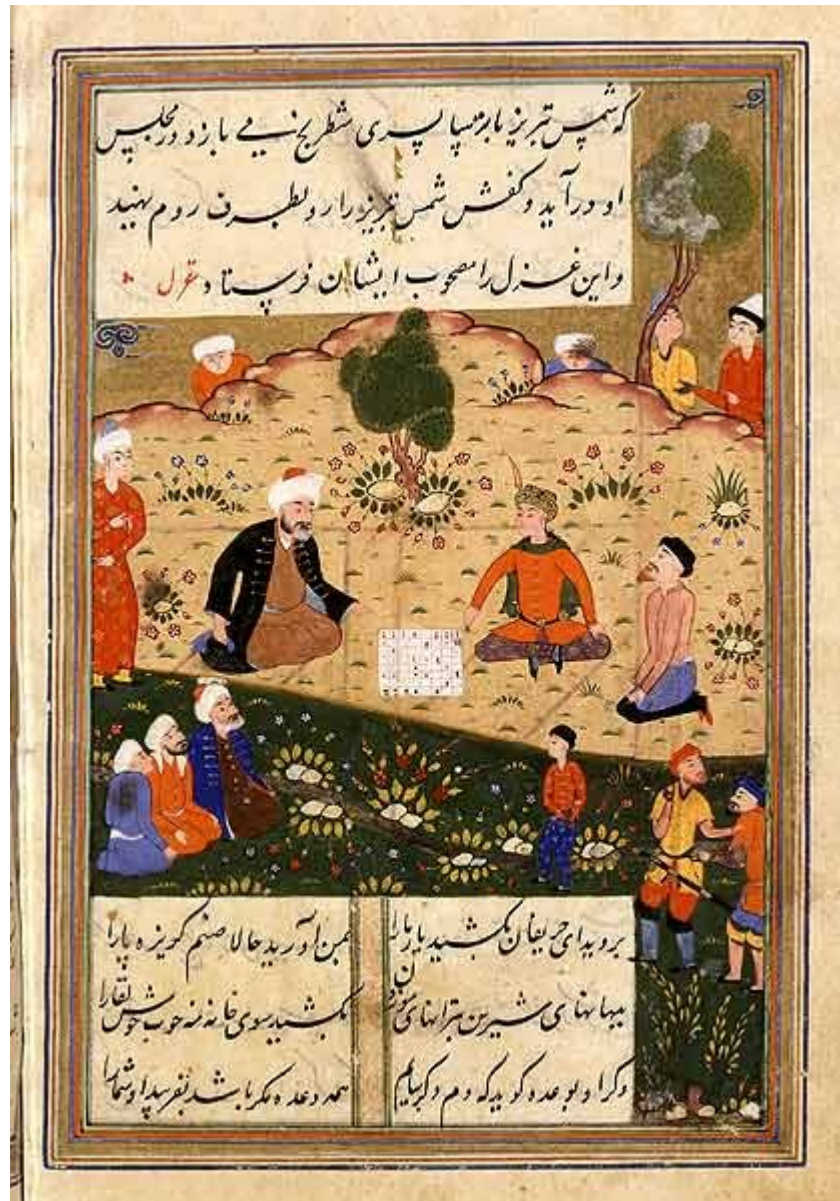
In the historic Karaköy district towards the end of the avenue, it is possible to see the world's second-oldest subway station, generally known and referred to as simply Tünel (The Tunnel) which entered service in 1875. Moreover, the German High School of Istanbul (Deutsche Schule Istanbul in German, Özel Alman Lisesi in Turkish) is also located near Tünel.

The cosmopolitan avenue is surrounded by an array of historical and politically significant buildings, such as the Çiçek Pasajı (Flower Passage) where small, intimate restaurants and taverns are found; Balık Pazarı (The Fish Market), the Roman Catholic churches of Santa Maria and S. Antonio di Padova, the Greek Orthodox Haghia Triada, the Armenian Church (among many other churches), several synagogues, mosques, academic institutions established by various European nations such as Austria, France, Germany and Italy in the early 19th century, consulates (former embassies before 1923) of several nations including France, Greece, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

During the Ottoman period, the avenue was called **Cadde-i Kebir** (Grand Avenue) and was a popular spot for Ottoman intellectuals, also becoming a center for European foreigners and the local Italian and French Levantines who referred to it as **Grande Rue de Péra**. When 19th century travelers referred to Constantinople (today, Istanbul) as the Paris of the East, they were mentioning the Grande Rue de Péra (İstiklal Caddesi) and its half-European, half-Asian culture. With the declaration of the Republic on October 29, 1923, the avenue's name was changed to **İstiklal** (Independence) for commemorating the triumph at the Turkish War of Independence.

**Mowlānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī or shortly Rumi** was born on 30 September 1207 in greater Balkh in the village of Wakhsh. He died on 17 December 1273 in Konya in present day Turkey (then Seljuqids of Rum). He was laid to rest beside his father, and over his remains a splendid shrine was erected. The 13th century Mevlana Mausoleum, with its mosque, dance hall, dervish living

quarters, school and tombs of some leaders of the Mevlevi Order, continues to this day to draw pilgrims from all parts of the Muslim and non-Muslim world. Jalal al-Din who is also known as Rumi, was a philosopher and mystic of Islam. His doctrine advocates unlimited tolerance, positive reasoning, goodness, charity and awareness through love. To him and to his disciples all religions are more or less truth. Looking with the same eye on Muslim, Jew and Christian alike, his peaceful and tolerant teaching has appealed to people of all sects and creeds. A hagiographical account of him is described in Shams ud-Din Ahmad Aflākī's *Manāqib ul-Ārifīn* (written between 1318 and 1353).



The general theme of Rumi's thought, like that of other mystic and Sufi poets of Persian literature, is essentially that of the concept of *tawhīd* – union with his beloved (the primal root) from which/whom he has been cut off and become aloof – and his longing and desire to restore it.

The *Masnavi* weaves fables, scenes from everyday life, Qur'anic revelations and exegesis, and

metaphysics into a vast and intricate tapestry. Rumi is considered an example of *Insan-e Kamil* — Perfect Man, the perfected or completed human being. In the East, it is said[weasel words] of him that he was "not a prophet — but surely, he has brought a scripture".

Rumi believed passionately in the use of music, poetry, and dance as a path for reaching God. For Rumi, music helped devotees to focus their whole being on the divine, and to do this so intensely that the soul was both destroyed and resurrected. It was from these ideas that the practice of "whirling" dervishes developed into a ritual form. His teachings became the base for the order of the *Mawlawi* which his son Sultan Walad organized. Rumi encouraged *samāʿ*, listening to music and turning or doing the sacred dance. In the *Mevlevi* tradition, *samāʿ* represents a mystical journey of spiritual ascent through mind and love to the Perfect One. In this journey, the seeker symbolically turns towards the truth, grows through love, abandons the ego, finds the truth, and arrives at the Perfect. The seeker then returns from this spiritual journey, with greater maturity, to love and to be of service to the whole of creation without discrimination with regard to beliefs, races, classes, and nations.

In other verses in the *Masnavi*, Rumi describes in detail the universal message of love:

*Lover's nationality is separate from all other religions,  
The lover's religion and nationality is the Beloved (God).*

*The lover's cause is separate from all other causes  
Love is the astrolabe of God's mysteries.*

### ***Philosophical outlook***

Rumi was an evolutionary thinker in the sense that he believed that the spirit after devolution from the divine Ego undergoes an evolutionary process by which it comes nearer and nearer to the same divine Ego. All matter in the universe obeys this law and this movement is due to an inbuilt urge (which Rumi calls "love") to evolve and seek enjoyment with the divinity from which it has emerged. Evolution into a human being from an animal is only one stage in this process. The doctrine of the Fall of Adam is reinterpreted as the devolution of the Ego from the universal ground of divinity and is a universal, cosmic phenomenon. The French philosopher Henri Bergson's idea of life being creative and evolutionary is similar, though unlike Bergson, Rumi believes that there is a specific goal to the process: the attainment of God. For Rumi, God is the ground as well as the goal of all existence.

However Rumi need not be considered a biological evolutionary creationist. In view of the fact that Rumi lived hundreds of years before Darwin, and was least interested in scientific theories, it is probable to conclude that he does not deal with biological evolution at all.

Rather he is concerned with the spiritual evolution of a human being: Man not conscious of God is akin to an animal and true consciousness makes him divine. Nicholson has seen this as a Neo-Platonic doctrine: the universal soul working through the various spheres of being, a doctrine introduced into Islam by Muslim philosophers like Al Farabi and being related at the same time to Ibn Sina's idea of love as the magnetically working power by which life is

*driven into an upward trend.*

*I died as a mineral and became a plant,*

*I died as plant and rose to animal,*

*I died as animal and I was Man.*

*Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?*

*Yet once more I shall die as Man, to soar*

*With angels bless'd; but even from angelhood*

*I must pass on: all except God doth perish.*

*When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,*

*I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.*

*Oh, let me not exist! for Non-existence*

*Proclaims in organ tones,*

*To Him we shall return.*

